

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-05 IO-13 MCT-01 EUR-12
ACDA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5884
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: IS, JO, US, PFOR, XF

SUBJECT: INITIAL ISRAELI REACTION TO HUSSEIN VISIT

1. COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECEPTION OF KING
HUSSEIN IN WASHINGTON, ACTING PRIME MINISTER PERES SAID
APRIL 25 THAT HE HOPED 1977 WOULD BRING PROGRESS TOWARDS
PEACE BUT THAT ONLY ISRAEL AMONG THE BELLIGERENT STATES
IS READY FOR TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE. THE GOVERNMENT
PRESS OFFICE ISSUED A BULLETIN CONTAINING PERES' REMARKS.
BEGIN TEXT

2. IN THIS YEAR OF ISRAEL'S SOVEREIGNTY,
WE SHALL PROBABLY BE FACING POLITICAL TESTS--AND I HOPE
ONLY POLITICAL ONES, ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF
THIS--AND I WAS VERY GLAD TO HEAR PRESIDENT CARTER'S
STATEMENTS AT THIS EVENING'S RECEPTION FOR KING HUSSEIN.
HE SEID HE WAS NOT CONVINCED--ALTHOUGH THE YEAR 1977
WAS AUSPICIOUS FOR CONDUCTION NEGOTIATIONS--THAT IT
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WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO BRING THE TALKS TO A SPEEDY CONCLUSION.

3. MR. PERES NOTED THAT THERE WAS SIGNIFICANCE IN
THIS POLITICAL REALISM, AND IN THE RESPONSIBLE STATE-
MENT OF PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT LEADER IN THE FREE
WORLD, WHO IS TAKING AN ALMOST PERSONAL INTEREST IN
MATTERS CONCERNING ISRAEL. "I TEND TO THINK ALONG

THE SAME LINES," ADDED MR. PERES. "IT IS INDEED POSSIBLE IN 1977 TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS ON PEACE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS, BUT THE PROBLEM OF CONCLUDING THEM STEMS FROM THREE CAUSES:

4. FIRST, THERE IS SO FAR NOT ONE ARAB LEADER WHO HAS EXPRESSED HIMSELF FULLY AND UNCONDITIONALLY IN FAVOR OF TRUE PEACE WITH ISRAEL. WHEN THE ARAB LEADERS TALK OF PEACE, THEIR WORDS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A WINK, NEBULOUS PHRASEOLOGY OR POLITICAL DOUBLETALK SUCH AS 'TERMINATION OF BELLIGERENCY', 'NORMALIZATION', OR 'SULHA'. ACTUAL PEACE--THIS IS SOMETHING THEY STILL FIND HARD TO PRONOUNCE.

5. SECONDLY, EVEN THOSE ARABS, INCLUDING SADAT AND HUSSEIN, WHO TALK OF ENDING THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY, ARE NOT PREPARED TO PAY THE PRICE. THE TRUTH IS THAT ONLY ISRAEL IS READY FOR TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE. THERE IS NOT ONE ARAB I KNOW WHO IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT TERRITORIAL COMPROMISES IN ORDER TO PUT AN END TO WAR AND BRING ABOUT PEACE.

6. THE THIRD REASON IS THAT THE ARAB WORLD, INCLUDING ITS MODERATE LEADERS, IS STILL BOUND TO, AND FOLLOWING, THE EXTREMIST LINE OF THE PLO AND ARAFAT. ARAFAT IN FACT SAYS SOMETHING VERY SIMPLE: HE FAVORS PEACE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE, BECAUSE THIS WILL ASSIST IN LIQUIDATING THE STATE OF ISRAEL. IN OTHER WORDS: HE WANTS PEACE IN ORDER TO DO AWAY UNCLASSIFIED

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WITH ISRAEL, AND I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT AN EXPERIENCED AND REASONABLE MAN LIKE SADAT DOES NOT REALIZE THAT ISRAEL CANNOT AGREE TO RETURN TO BORDERS A FEW KILOMETERS EAST OF BEN GURION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, WHERE ANY TERRORIST EQUIPPED WITH A SHOULDER MISSILE LAUNCHER CAN ENDANGER A PLANE TAKING OFF--OR RETURN TO ROSH HA-AYIN, RAMAT HAKOVESH AND WADI ARA SO THAT THE TERRORIST BUILD-UP THAT DEVASTATED THE LEBANON AND ITS SOVEREIGNTY FOR YEARS TO COME, COULD BE MOVED UP INTO JUDEA AND SAMARIA. I THINK THAT THE BEGINNING OF ARAB READINESS FOR PEACE WILL BE THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH US FACE TO FACE, NOT ONLY TO ANNOUNCE THEIR DEFINITE DICTATES, BUT ALSO TO LISTEN TO OUR VITAL CONDITIONS."

7. SPEAKING AT AN INDEPENDENCE DAY ASSEMBLY OF ARMY INVALIDS AT TEL AVIV'S MANN AUDITORIUM THIS EVENING (MONDAY), MR. PERES CONCLUDED: "THIS YEAR, ISRAEL WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD AND DEVELOP. ISRAEL

WANTS PEACE, AND IS STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND THREATS.
ISRAEL IS FORTIFIED AGAINST ANY ATTACK--AND IS OPEN
TO EVERY READINESS FOR NEGOTIATION."

8. THE ASSEMBLY WAS ADDRESSED ALSO BY THE CHIEF OF
STAFF, THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE,
AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ARMY INVALIDS' ASSOCIATION.
END TEXT

9. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JERUSALEM POST WHICH
OVERLOOKED PERES' REMARKS, THE ISRAELE PRESS ALL
DEVOTED AT LEAST SOME ATTENTION TO HIS STATEMENT, THUS
FAR THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT REACTION HERE.

10. IN OTHER COVERAGE OF HUSSEIN'S VISIT, ISRAELI
PRESS REPORTS APRIL 26 PLAYED UP AMERICAN "REJECTION"
OF PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. FOR EXAMPLE, THE
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JERUSALEM POST'S BLITZER NOTED THAT THE WHITE HOUSE
SPOKESMAN'S COMMENTS SEEMED TO BE THE MOST SPECIFIC
U.S. STATEMENT YET RULING OUT "THE JORDANIAN OPTION"
(I.E., JOINT JORDANIAN-PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA)
UNLESS THERE IS FIRST A PLO CHANGE OF POSITION TOWARDS
ISRAEL. THE NEWSPAPERS ALSO NOTED KING HUSSEIN'S
INCREASED "OPTIMISM" DESPITE PRESIDENT CARTER'S
STATEMENT THAT "WE MUST NOT BE TOO OPTIMISTIC."
MAARIV CONTRASTED PRESIDENT CARTER'S CAUTION WITH
HIS STATEMENT TO PRESIDENT SADAT THREE WEEKS AGO
THAT 1977 WOULD PROVIDE A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR
PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE. THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS
PORTRAYED AS ATTEMPTING TO REASSURE KING HUSSEIN IN
THE WAKE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S "HOMELAND" REMARKS.
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